The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Taiwan

Feast of the month of Glory

17 May 2007

Dear Baha'i friends,

The exciting Fortune Seminar and National Convention have both passed swiftly by. We proudly fulfilled our goal of a financial obligation, and successfully elected our new National Assembly members. Following that, the annual Institutional Meeting will take place soon. With eagerness, we look forward to new guidance and inspiration from that meeting.

In the past few months, we have noticed that some community members, aside from focusing on core activities, have request that the community undergo or provide activities such as firesides, deepening classes, fund education, Baha'i School, and even a Fun Day. This request and idea caused an active discussion in the Convention. Are we going to focus on core activities only, or are we going to provide and satisfy the needs of the community? The National Assembly feels it necessary to give a clear explanation. Because the Universal House of Justice, in its letter to Continental Board of Counselors meeting, dated 27 December 2005, values the ability of "focus", "This ability (focus), slowly acquired through successive Plans, represents one of its most valuable assets…" Therefore it deserves careful treatment.

How important is the focus, we might want to know? In the same letter, we read, "Perhaps the task that will occupy the attention of you and your auxiliaries above all others is to assist the community in its effort to maintain focus." Now one can easily understand why the institution of the Counsellors always stresses focus everywhere they go. Some friends might worry that other needs of the Baha'is, and the community, will be neglected and community life will become less rich, because of this focus. But we must avoid one

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trap, and understand “To maintain focus does not imply that special needs and interests are neglected, much less that essential activities are dropped in order to accommodate others.” Again we read. “Clearly, there are a host of elements that comprise Baha'i community life, shaped over the decades, which must be further refined and developed.” That gives us a balanced opinion in this regard. However, the House advises us that, “On the other hand, you will want to take every opportunity to reinforce the disposition to prioritize--one which recognizes that not all activities have the same importance at a given stage of growth, that some must necessarily take precedence over others, that even the most well-intentioned proposals can cause distraction, dissipate energy or impede progress.” Any individual Baha’i or community which decides, after deep reflection, to perform any service other than core activities, may not be questioned or even forbidden. But the friends should think twice, for there is a consequence. “What should be plainly acknowledged is that the time available for the friends to serve the Faith in every community is not without limits.” Certainly the Universal House of Justice expects “… that the preponderating share of this limited resource would be expended in meeting the provisions of the Plan.”

In the Ridvan message 2007, we are reminded of focus: “Everywhere the friends had to learn the requirements of steady growth--to promote systematic action and to avoid distractions…” The mind and will of the beloved Universal House of Justice can be discerned in one entire paragraph, “With so firm a foundation in place, the foremost thought in the mind of each and every believer should be teaching. Whether in their personal efforts they teach their friends in firesides and then involve them in the core activities or use these activities as their primary instrument for teaching, whether as a community they make their work with children and junior youth the initial thrust in a cluster or focus first on the older generations, whether in their collective endeavours they visit

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families in teams as part of an intensive campaign or call on seekers in their homes periodically over time--these are decisions that can only be made according to the circumstances and possibilities of the friends and the nature of the populations with whom they interact. What all must acknowledge, irrespective of circumstance, are both the crying need of a humanity that, bereft of spiritual sustenance, is sinking deeper into despair and the urgency of the responsibility to teach with which we each have been entrusted as members of the community of the Greatest Name.”

We sincerely hope the above explanation will enhance and give a balanced understanding of this crucial issue.

With loving Baha’i greetings,

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Taiwan

Thomas Lee, Secretary

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Treasurer

Dear beloved Baha'i friends,

How time flies! The first year of the 5 Year Plan has passed. The National convention that is held once a year was also ended with enthusiastic participation of delegates.

This past year, the advancement of service/activities of friends for the Faith, and knowledge about funds and Huququ'llah, have improved and resulted in the friends contributing to funds, and paying their Huququ'llah. These show the friends' certitude and identity have increased.

The International Financial Collaboration Fund has also been supported by friends. The first year goal (US$8,000) of the 5 year plan US$60, 000 had been achieved, and was wire transferred few days ago to support the NSA of El Salvador. Our goal for the second year is US$9,500, and we will be advised by the House as to which country we will give this support. We hope the friends can continuously and increasingly support the National fund, International Financial Collaboration project, and other funds.

After the great success of Fortune Seminar, held at the end of March, the National Assembly has also planned to hold a Regional Fortune Seminar in southern, central, northern and eastern regions. The first one has already held on May 6 in Tainan. The conference also ended with great support from the Tainan and Kaohsiung friends, as well as the Deputy of Huququ'llah Jean Boone, and National Assembly representative Lin Jing-Yi. The schedule of the other regions will be set soon and the friends informed. We hope to see friends who have been or have not been in the National Fortune Conference participate in their regional

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conference. We can all gain our knowledge and contribute to the lifeblood of the Faith.

Also, this is the first time the National Assembly did not set any National Fund goals for local assemblies or communities. No matter whether you are in a community with a local assembly, in a group of a few believers, or an individual, all can contribute to National Fund in the name of your local assembly or community. The blessing will be with local assembly or community. We hope each local assembly, community, or individual believer can set a goal for the National Fund, and inform the National treasurer about your goal, so the Treasurer can know where the income for the whole year will come from.

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> *The institution of the National Fund, so vital and essential for the uninterrupted progress of these activities must, in particular, be assured of the wholehearted the ever-increasing and universal support of the mass of believers, for whose welfare, and in whose name, these beneficent activities have been initiated and have been conducted. All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. ...*
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> *(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 t*o 1986, p. 21)

Best regards,

Pei-Hua Lin
National Treasurer

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